

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:STESCUDERO:LAB

APPROVED BY NEA- MR. ATHERTON

D - MR. PENDLETON

S/S - MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

S E C R E T STATE 031272

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, SS, MO, IR

SUBJECT: INGERSOLL-ZAHEDI MEETING, FEBRUARY 5, 1976

SUMMARY - AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI CALLED ON DEPUTY SECRETARY TO DISCUSS MESSAGES SENT TO NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING IRAN, BY PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE AND FON. MIN. BOUTEFLIKA RE SPANISH SAHARA. ZAHEDI ALSO REQUESTED AND RECEIVED BRIEFING ON LEBANON AND RABIN VISIT TO U.S. ZAHEDI DESCRIBED IRAN'S POSITION ON SAHARA AS SIMILAR TO OURS, AND NOTED THAT SHAH HAD REPLIED TO EARLIER BOUMEDIENE DEMARCHE WITH LETTER SUPPORTIVE OF MOROCCO. HE ALSO NOTED STRONG IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR SPAIN AND KING JUAN CARLOS. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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ATHERTON MET WITH AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI AT LATTER'S REQUEST FEBRUARY 5 TO DISCUSS SPANISH SAHARA. MR. INGERSOLL NOTED

THAT U.S. HAD RECEIVED MESSAGES FROM ALGERIA ON SAHARA QUESTION SIMILAR TO THOSE RECEIVED BY IRAN AND OTHER ISLAMIC NATIONS, MESSAGES WHICH WE REGARD AS STATEMENTS OF ALGERIAN POSITION NOT NECESSARILY CALLING FOR REPLY.

2. MR. ATHERTON NOTED THAT WE HAVE NOT TAKEN POSITION ON SUBSTANCE OF ISSUE BUT SUPPORT TRIPARTITE ACCORD AND UN

RESOLUTION WHICH ENDORSED IT. WE HAVE URGED THE PARTIES TO REACH A PEACEFUL NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. WE ALSO FAVOR ONGOING MEDIATION EFFORTS BY VARIOUS ARAB STATES AND BY UN AND WOULD PREFER THAT SAHARA ISSUE NOT BECOME INTERNATIONALIZED. MR. ATHERTON STATED THAT US HAS NO FIRM EVIDENCE OF CUBANS, NORTH VIETNAMESE OR SOVIET ADVISORS IN SAHARA AND DESCRIBED MAJOR ISSUE AS MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENT OVER MEANING AND PROCESS OF SELF-DETERMINATION, WHICH WAS MENTIONED IN BOTH COMPETING UN RESOLUTIONS.

3. ZAHEDI DESCRIBED IRANIAN POSITIONS AS SIMILAR TO THAT OF USG AND NOTED THAT SHAH HAD REPLIED TO INFORMAL WRITTEN REQUEST FROM BOUMEDIENE FOR SUPPORT BY STATING IRANIAN BELIEF THAT MOROCCO WAS IN NEED OF QUOTE A BOOST UNQUOTE. ZAHEDI WENT ON TO SAY THAT ALGERIA SHOULD PERMIT MOROCCAN TAKEOVER IN SAHARA. ZAHEDI REMARKED THAT ALGERIAN REACTION TO IMPERIAL REPLY WAS NOT SHARP BUT ALGERIA DID NOT TAKE SHAH'S ADVICE. AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI UNDERLINED CONTINUING CLOSE IRANIAN-MOROCCAN RELATIONSHIP AND DESCRIBED VISIT OF COURT MINISTER ALAM TO RABAT AS AN INDICATION OF SUPPORT FOR HASSAN'S REGIME.

4. RELAYING REPORT WHICH IRANIAN AMBASSADOR TO EAST GERMANY HAD RECEIVED, ZAHEDI SAID THAT CUBAN AMBASSADOR IN EAST BERLIN HAS TOLD TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR THAT CUBANS HAVE ADVISORS IN ALGERIA (INCLUDING 200 IN SAHARA), SYRIA AND SOUTH YEMEN WHERE THEY ARE TRAINING PARA-MILITARY FORCES FOR DHOFAR WAR AS WELL AS WORKERS FOR FISHING FLEETS. WHEN MR. ATHERTON NOTED WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF CUBAN PRESENCE IN SAHARA, ZAHEDI ADMITTED HE WAS NOT CONFIDENT

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OF TRUTH OF HIS REPORT. HE ALSO STATED THAT IRANIAN TROOPS HAD NEVER FOUND CUBAN ADVISORS IN DHOFAR ITSELF.

5. MR. ATHERTON EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN RE AVOIDING DAMAGE TO US RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA WHERE POSSIBLE, WHILE CONTINUING TO MAKE CLEAR OUR SYMPATHY AND WARM FEELINGS FOR MOROCCO. ZAHEDI COMMENTED THAT IRAN HAS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BOTH ALGERIA AND MOROCCO AND HOPES THAT SAHARA CRISIS CAN BE RESOLVED EN-FAMILLE AMONG ARABS. ZAHEDI THEN REMARKED THAT IRAN HAD ADVISED MOROCCO NOT

TO GO TOO FAR AGAINST SPAIN DURING EARLIER PORTION OF SAHARA CRISIS AND COMMENTED THAT IRAN HAD SUPPORTED SPAIN AND KING JUAN CARLOS IN CONVERSATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER EUROPEAN NATIONS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO ZAHEDI'S INQUIRY ABOUT RABIN VISIT, MR. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT, CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS, NO AGREEMENTS OR CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED DURING VISIT. RABIN'S TRIP TO US SHOULD BE VIEWED AS PART OF PROCESS OF ON-GOING CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS ON MIDDLE EAST QUESTION. USG'S POSITION OF WHICH RABIN WAS INFORMED WAS THAT MIDDLE EAST SITUATION CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO STAGNATE.

7. ZAHEDI THEN ASKED ABOUT LEBANESE SITUATION. ATHERTON INDICATED THAT WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT SITUATION IMPROVING. IN MANY RESPECTS SYRIAN INTERVENTION HAS BEEN HELPFUL.

MR. INGERSOLL AGREED AND NOTED THAT MUCH OF PROGRESS STEMS FROM DISCUSSION FOR FIRST TIME OF POLITICAL SOLUTIONS. AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI SAID THAT SHAH BELIEVES SYRIA HAS PLAYED USEFUL ROLE. INGERSOLL

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